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OUR WAR WITH GERMANY

XII

(February 6—March 5)

THE United States has completed the eleventh month of its war against the Imperial German Government. The month opened with a disaster at sea, in the loss of the transport *Tuscania*, torpedoed by a German submarine, almost at the completion of her journey to a British port with 2,179 American soldiers aboard, many of whom were lost. It closed with the repulse of a strong German raid upon a part of the front line trenches in France held by American troops. This was not a battle, nor even a raid of great importance. The news despatches were curiously exact in specifying that the German force numbered 240 men. They reported that numerous Americans were killed and others wounded, adding that many Germans were killed, including two officers whose bodies were left tangled up in the barbed wire defences of the American trenches. Two or three of the Germans who managed to get as far as the American trenches were unable to escape with their retreating comrades, and remained as prisoners in American hands. Complete details have not been received at this writing, but there were indications that some American prisoners were taken by the raiders, which, no doubt, was the German object.

Throughout the month there have been constant reports of minor contacts between our men and the Germans, and the beginning of our casualty list has been made. We have gained experience with gas, barrage fire, grenades and bombs, and other features of modern war. There has been nothing yet approaching the magnitude of a serious action, however—nothing to furnish a comparative test of the fighting qualities of the new American army. But they have shown on all the less important occasions in which they have met the Germans that they are well worthy of the confidence of their people in the account they will render of themselves when the real trial comes.

The *Tuscania* was the first American troopship to fall a victim to the submarines. In addition to the 2,179 soldier passengers she carried a crew of 222, making 2,401 persons aboard. Of these 149 soldiers and 17 members of the crew were lost. The others were taken off by British torpedo boat destroyers which had been guarding the convoy of which the *Tuscania* formed part, or were saved by means of boats and rafts. The universal testimony of the survivors was of the gallantry of the young troops in the face of the great test. It was their superb discipline which brought so large a number through safely. Part of the survivors were landed at Irish ports and part in Scotland.

But while this disaster at sea, and the steady report of small losses in action, served throughout the month to deepen the impression upon the minds of the people in the United States that their armed force was beginning at length to make itself felt on the battle fronts, the dominant note of the month was possible peace. The intermittent negotiations between the Bolshevist Russians and the Teutonic Allies at Brest-Litovsk were alternately on and off, then came to a complete rupture, when Trotzky, refusing to sign a treaty on the basis of the German terms, declared Russia's warfare at an end and the demobilization of the Russian armies. No peace had been signed, but then, as they seemed to think, it took two sides to make a war, and as they were determined not to have war Germany could not go on alone. If they really thought that, they did not understand the full capabilities of the Germans. There was a brief and surprised pause. Then the German newspapers began to talk seriously of the grave necessity of moving forward in Russia, and of the urgent appeal of the Ukrainians for German aid.

The Ukrainians had been permitted to enter into independent negotiations with the Teutonic allies, and they agreed on peace terms and signed the treaty. When the Bolsheviki turned on Ukraina the new German "friends" of the Rada went promptly to the assistance of the Ukrainian Republic. Reports are conflicting, but it seems that there was a bloody battle for possession of Kiev, won by the Bolsheviki, with horrible slaughter during and following the fighting.

The announcement of the peace between Ukraina and the Central Powers was made on February 9. The next day Trotzky made his great gesture. Thereupon von Kuehlmann, the German Foreign Minister and Count Czernin, the Austrian, went back to Berlin and German Great Headquarters, whence it was announced that the Brest-Litovsk negotiations "having ended in violent rupture bearing the seeds of future conflict, it was necessary to consider the eventuality of very energetic military measures against the Russians." On February 18 Berlin announced that two German armies were advancing against the Russians. One crossed the Dvina and moved on Dvinsk, quickly occupying it. "Called on by Ukraina to help in her heavy struggle against Great Russia," said the Berlin announcement, "our troops have commenced their advance."

The next day Lenin and Trotzky announced that they had been forced to sign a peace on German terms, and sent a wireless message to Berlin. General Hoffmann, one of the negotiators at Brest-Litovsk, demanded the signed document. He remarked that telegraphed signatures were not binding and might be forged. Germany now made new terms; surrender of more territory and a huge indemnity, variously reported as about \$4,000,000,000. The Germans captured thousands of prisoners, many guns and quantities of military supplies in their advance.

On February 22 Lenin and Krylenko, the subaltern commander-in-chief of the Bolsheviki armies, signed a proclamation posted in Petrograd calling all the Russians to fight the invader to the death. As this is written the news despatches report the Germans as proclaiming their intention to hang or shoot the Bolshevist Red Guards whom they catch, especially in Ukraina, and assert that a start was made by hang-

ing 200 in the market place at Wolmar, without investigation.

The obvious, tangible result, therefore, of the Russian revolution thus far, is the practically complete disruption of Russia; the cessation of her warfare against Germany, Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria; the vast advantage of Germany and her allies; the possession by Germany of a tremendous extent of Russian territory, with enormous supplies of food and various kinds of military material, including guns and munitions; the liberation in Russia of hundreds of thousands of German and Austrian prisoners of war, and the ultimate great reinforcement of Germany's man power. These are facts all of which have a direct bearing upon what the United States must be willing and prepared to do in order to see that our war against the Imperial German Government does not end in a disaster to us and to civilization.

The progressive disruption of Russia having proceeded so rapidly as seriously to menace the stability of conditions in Eastern Siberia, Japanese occupation of Vladivostok and of points west along the railroad became a subject of earnest consultation among the Allies. It was reported that Japan was ready to take active measures, both to protect her own paramount interests against the danger of German organization of Eastern Russia and also in defense of Allied interests. Great Britain, France and Italy were reported to have advised Japan to act. The American Government, however, still clings, apparently, to the hope that some power of recuperation in Russia may yet free her miraculously from the blight of Bolshevism, and bring her again into the line of duty to civilization. Our consent to the proposed action by Japan is withheld therefore, and at this writing nothing has been done.

While the Russian attempt to secure peace through direct negotiation with the Germans was moving on to failure at Brest-Litovsk, the American attempt to bring peace nearer through public speech was proceeding. The eleventh month of our war with Germany was marked by the continuance, by President Wilson, of the long range discussion of general peace principles with Count von Hertling, the German Chancellor, and Count Czernin, the Austrian Foreign Minister, which formed so interesting a part of the history of the tenth month. On February 11 Mr. Wilson went before a joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives and delivered an address in reply to the speeches of Hertling and Czernin on January 24. Those speeches had been in the nature of replies to President Wilson's address to Congress on January 8, when he laid down fourteen conditions of peace. Now the German Chancellor has again replied to the President, in a speech before the Reichstag on February 25, and the prospect of peace is brighter or darker according as one interprets what the statesmen said.

In his February 11 address Mr. Wilson differentiated the speeches of the two Teutonic statesmen and declared that the German's was "certainly in a very different tone from that of Count Czernin and apparently of an opposite purpose." The President dwelt upon this and seemed to be actuated by hope of developing a difference between his two enemies. He credited Czernin with seeing the "fundamental elements of peace with clear eyes" and with not seeking to obscure them. But Hertling seemed to have forgotten or to ignore the Reichstag reso-

lutions of July 19—the peace without annexations or indemnities resolutions.

“What is at stake now is the peace of the world,” declared Mr. Wilson. “This,” he added, “depends upon the just settlement of each of the several problems to which I adverted in my recent address to the Congress.” That referred to the fourteen conditions of peace he laid down in his January 8 speech. But he immediately qualified that by saying “I, of course, do not mean that the peace of the world depends upon the acceptance of any particular set of suggestions as to the way in which those problems are to be dealt with.”

After further consideration of this point, and further emphasis on the difference between Hertling and Czernin, the President laid down these four general principles essential to any effective consideration of peace:

First—That each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case, and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent.

Second—That peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power; but that

Third—Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the population concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims among rival States; and,

Fourth—That all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe, and consequently, of the world.

“A general peace erected upon such foundations can be discussed,” said Mr. Wilson. “Until such a peace can be secured we have no choice but to go on.”

The same day that the President laid down these four principles the German Kaiser, replying to an address presented by the Burgo-master of Hamburg on the occasion of the peace with Ukrania, explained the German view of how peace may be achieved. He said:

We ought to bring peace to the world. We shall seek in every way to do it. Such an end was achieved yesterday in a friendly manner with an enemy, which, beaten by our armies, perceives no reason for fighting longer, extends a hand to us and receives our hand. We clasp hands.

But he who will not accept peace, but on the contrary declines, pouring out the blood of his own and of our people, must be forced to have peace. We desire to live in friendship with neighboring peoples, but the victory of German arms must first be recognized. Our troops under the great Hindenburg will continue to win it. Then peace will come.

President Wilson's speech evoked a very prompt and public disclaimer from the British Premier. Mr. Lloyd-George addressed the House of Commons the following day and declared that, although he regretted it, he could not altogether accept the President's interpretation of the Czernin speech.

"It is perfectly true, as far as the tone is concerned," he said, "that there is a great difference between the Austrian and German speeches. But I wish I could believe there is a difference in substance." Then, referring to the Czernin speech he added, "It was extraordinarily civil in tone, and friendly. But when you come to the demands put forward by the Allies it was adamant."

The British Premier went on to show the unyielding character of the two speeches, and said that until there was some better proof than had been provided in these speeches that the Central Powers were prepared to consider the aims and ideals for which the Allies were fighting it would be Great Britain's regrettable duty to go on and make preparations necessary to establish international rights by force of arms.

Count von Hertling's latest reply to Mr. Wilson was delivered before the Reichstag on February 25. He began by saying that the Reichstag was entitled to an explanatory statement, "although I entertain certain doubts as to the utility and success of dialogues carried on by ministers and statesmen of belligerent countries." He agreed with Mr. Runciman's view, as expressed in the Commons, that "we should get much nearer to peace if responsible representatives of the belligerent Powers would come together in an intimate meeting for discussion. I can only agree with him that that would be the way to remove numerous intentional and unintentional misunderstandings and compel our enemies to take our words as they are meant, and on their part also to show their colors."

With that introduction Count von Hertling proceeded to analyze the four principles of peaceful settlement laid down by President Wilson, and to declare his fundamental agreement with them. After stating the first one, in the President's terms, he said:

"Who could contradict this? The phrase, coined by the great father of the Church, Augustine, 1,500 years ago—'*justitia fundamentum regnorum*'—is still valid today. Certain it is that only peace based in all its parts on the principles of justice has a prospect of endurance."

Then, quoting the President's second clause he commented:

This clause, too, can be unconditionally assented to. Indeed, one wonders that the President of the United States considered it necessary to emphasize it anew. This clause contains a polemic against conditions long vanished, views against Cabinet politics and Cabinet wars, against mixing state territory and princely and private property, which belong to a past that is far behind us.

I do not want to be discourteous, but when one remembers the earlier utterances of President Wilson, one might think he is laboring under the illusion that there exists in Germany an antagonism between an autocratic government and a mass of people without rights.

The third clause is only the application of the foregoing in a definite direction, or a deduction from it, and is therefore included in the assent given to that clause.

Then, quoting the President's fourth clause, von Hertling said:

Here, also, I can give assent in principle, and I declare, therefore, with President Wilson, that a general peace on such a basis is discussable.

Only one reservation is to be made. These principles must not be proposed by the President of the United States alone, but they must also be recognized definitely by all States and nations. President Wilson, who reproaches the

German Chancellor with a certain amount of backwardness, seems to me in his flight of ideas to have hurried far in advance of existing realities.

Having thus accepted the Wilsonian principles, Count von Hertling labored to forestall their application to the Russian case. In doing this he produced the interesting assertion that Germany's course against Russia was defensive rather than aggressive.

"Our war aims from the beginning," he said, "were the defense of the Fatherland, the maintenance of our territorial integrity, and the freedom of our economic development. Our warfare, even where it must be aggressive in action, is defensive in aim. I lay especial stress upon that just now in order that no misunderstandings shall arise about our operation in the east."

From that he progressed to declarations that Germany does not intend to establish herself in Esthonia and Livonia, and that her object in Courland and Lithuania is chiefly "to create organs of self-determination and self-administration."

Speaking in the House of Commons two days later Foreign Secretary Balfour declared that he was unable to find in von Hertling's speech any basis for fruitful conversation or hope of peace. The German Chancellor's lip service to President Wilson's proposition, said Mr. Balfour, was not supported by German practice.

Coincident with the report of the Chancellor's smooth description of Germany's purposes, principles and practice, came the news that a German submarine had torpedoed another British hospital ship, the *Glenart*, clearly marked and lighted, with loss of 164 lives.

Announcements of American casualties—in small numbers as yet—have become a regular feature of the news. There is an almost daily repetition of the phrase "Gen. Pershing reports" followed by names of men killed or wounded. And with significant frequency have appeared reports of fatal accidents at the aviation training camps. Secretary Baker permitted the announcement to be made, toward the close of the month, that the first American battle planes were on their way to France.

Mr. Baker revealed the fact that these planes are equipped with twelve-cylinder Liberty motors. But no information was given as to numbers of manufacture or shipment. The Secretary had insisted, before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, that 1,500,000 American troops would be ready for service in France this year. The implication was that whether or not they are actually sent to France depends, or will depend, on the question of ocean transportation. The War Department is asking Congress for \$450,000,000 more for aviation.

On February 10 Mr. Baker announced the organization of the Army General Staff into five divisions, Executive, War Plans, Purchases and Supplies, Storage and Traffic, and Army Operations. Each division is under a director who is an assistant chief of staff. Meantime Congress is proceeding with consideration of measures that will or may involve considerable army reorganization. One of these measures is the so-called Overman bill, conferring upon the President blanket power to reorganize the executive departments without regard to the limitations of existing law, and to shift bureaus and their personnel from

one to another as he sees fit, to rearrange duties, and generally to effect such organization of the administration as he deems best to secure the most efficient results. As at first drafted this bill conferred upon the President authority to create new bureaus and offices. There was much opposition to the bill, and especially to this feature. But it has been modified somewhat in committee and seems to have developed support enough to secure its enactment. The disposition generally seems to be to give the President every power which he feels he needs for successfully carrying on the war.

Congress is also at work on the bill giving the President all the power with regard to Government operation of the railroads which he asked in his special address on that subject, and guaranteeing the financial return that he suggested. At the same time a bill creating a War Finance Corporation, to be owned by the Government, is on its way to enactment. This corporation is to have a capital of \$500,000,000 and to be authorized to issue bonds to the amount of \$4,000,000,000 in order to enable it to make advances to war and contributory industries. These bonds are to be receivable by the Federal Reserve Banks for discount.

Secretary McAdoo has announced the opening of subscriptions for the Third Liberty Loan on April 6, the first anniversary of the declaration of war against the Imperial German Government. In preparation for floating the loan he has offered treasury certificates of indebtedness in \$500,000,000 lots at fortnightly intervals, with the expectation of floating \$3,000,000,000 of them among the banks before the general subscription to the bonds begins.

With the news of casualties, and of the sinking of ships coming by cable almost every day during the month, there has come also, from various places within the country, and especially from shipbuilding establishments, news of labor troubles and of strikes. One labor union in particular, the ship carpenters, whose leader had not joined with the other union labor leaders in agreeing to submit differences and difficulties to the Wage Adjustment Commission organized by the Shipping Board, made demands for increase of wages and for the closed shop, and struck to enforce these demands, without giving an opportunity to any Government agency to offer a solution. Chairman Hurley, of the Shipping Board, telegraphed Mr. Hutcheson, the leader of this union, urging him to take the patriotic course, but Hutcheson insisted on his demands. At length President Wilson telegraphed Hutcheson, setting forth the situation in the shipbuilding industry and asking, "Will you co-operate or will you obstruct?" Thereupon Hutcheson advised the ship carpenters to return to work, but still held out for the closed shop. Union labor generally stood by the Government, and pledged unswerving efforts until the Kaiser yields.

A significant announcement of great cheer came from the Navy Department on February 18. It was that construction work had proceeded so much faster than anticipated that it was possible to order a number of additional torpedo boat destroyers, and contracts were let accordingly. It was an inspiring evidence of efficiency.

(This record is as of March 5 and is to be continued)